

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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TO AMEMBASSY BONN NIACT IMMEDIATE
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INFO AMCONSUL FRANKFURT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 109566

C O R R E C T E D COPY(LINE 6 PARA 3 OMITTED)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, GE, GW, US

SUBJECT: PRISONER EXCHANGE: PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. PRESENT SCENARIO CALLS FOR MRS. VOGEL TO ARRIVE AT
INVALIDENSTRASSE IN HER CAR WITH VAN NORMAN AT 1115
MAY 1. SHE WILL BE MET BY MISSION PUBLIC SAFETY
ADVISER HUMPHREY WHO WILL RIDE WITH MRS. VOGEL AND
VAN NORMAN TO MISSION WHERE MR. VOGEL AND THOMPSON
WILL BE WAITING AND WHERE TURNOVER WILL TAKE PLACE
AT ABOUT 1145. THESE DETAILS SHOULD NOT BE MADE KNOWN
TO PRESS, BUT MISSION SPOKESMAN MAY CONFIRM THAT
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THOMPSON-VAN NORMAN EXCHANGE WILL TAKE PLACE, AS
AGREED EARLIER, IN BERLIN ON MAY 1. JUST PRIOR TO AND
DURING ACTUAL EXCHANGE, PRESS SHOULD BE BARRED FROM
MISSION PREMISES.

2. FOLLOWING EXCHANGE, VOGEL, WHO HAS EXPRESSED STRONG
DESIRE TO AVOID PRESS, SHOULD LEAVE MISSION WITH WIFE

AND THOMPSON VIA REAR ENTRANCE-

3. WHILE VAN NORMAN WILL, OF COURSE, BE FREE TO DO WHATEVER HE WANTS AFTER EXCHANGE, HE SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE, OR OTHERWISE MEET PRESS, ON MISSION PREMISES. VAN NORMAN AND HIS MOTHER SHOULD EXIT MISSION VIA CLAYALEE CONSULAR ENTRANCE ACCOMPANIED BY MISSION PRESS SPOKESMAN. SPOKESMAN SHOULD, AT THAT TIME, DISTRIBUTE BRIEF WRITTEN STATEMENT (TEXT BELOW) AND OFFER NO COMMENT TO QUESTIONS. VAN NORMANS WOULD THEN BE FREE TO ADDRESS PRESS, IF THEY DESIRE, IN FRONT OF BUILDING.

4. BEFORE VAN NORMAN LEAVES MISSION, HE SHOULD BE ASKED CONTENTS OF HIS WRITTEN "CONFESSION" AND ANY OTHER ADMISSIONS TO GDR AUTHORITIES AND, IN VIEW OF PRIVACY ACT, ASKED TO CLEAR MISSION PRESS STATEMENT. HE AND HIS MOTHER SHOULD BE ADVISED TO CONSIDER FATES OF OTHERS INVOLVED WHEN MAKING THEIR STATEMENTS, IF ANY, TO THE PRESS (VOGEL SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED TWO EAST GERMANS ALLEGEDLY ARRESTED WITH VAN NORMAN AND REQUESTED THAT VAN NORMAN NOT DISCUSS THE DETAILS OF THE ACT FOR WHICH HE WAS ARRESTED). THEY SHOULD ALSO BE ENCOURAGED TO FLY HOME DIRECTLY WITHOUT A STOPOVER IN LONDON. FYI BY LEADING PRESS TO HIS CHURCH FRIENDS IN LONDON, VAN NORMAN COULD CAUSE THEM, CONFIDENTIAL

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HIMSELF AND THOSE EAST GERMANS POSSIBLY STILL IN JAIL EMBARRASSMENT OR WORSE. END FYI.

5. TEXT OF WRITTEN STATEMENT TO BE RELEASED BY MISSION PRESS SPOKESMAN AFTER EXCHANGE IS AS FOLLOWS: BEGIN TEXT.

AT (TIME)THIS MORNING, ALAN STUART VAN NORMAN, WHO HAD BEEN RELEASED BY GDR AUTHORITIES EARLIER IN THE DAY, WAS REUNITED WITH HIS MOTHER AT THE U.S. MISSION BERLIN. AT THE SAME TIME, ROBERT GLENN THOMPSON, WHO HAD BEEN PAROLED BY UNITED STATES AUTHORITIES, DEPARTED THE U.S. MISSION BERLIN FOR EAST BERLIN ACCOMPANIED BY HIS DEFENSE ATTORNEY, DR. WOLFGANG VOGEL. THOMPSON WAS SENTENCED TO 30-YEAR IMPRISONMENT ON MAY 13, 1965, AFTER PLEADING GUILTY OF CONSPIRING TO VIOLATE TITLE 18 OF U.S. CODE 7794 (ESPIONAGE). VAN NORMAN WAS ARRESTED NEAR GERA, GDR, ON AUGUST 2, 1977 AND SENTENCED ON JANUARY 17, 1978 TO TWO AND A HALF YEARS ON CHARGES RELATED TO HELPING EAST GERMANS CROSS TO THE WEST. THE ARRANGEMENTS LEADING TO THE RELEASE OF MESSRS. THOMPSON AND VAN NORMAN WERE

NEGOTIATED CHIEFLY BY DR. VOGEL, AN EAST BERLIN
ATTORNEY, AND CONGRESSMAN BENJAMIN GILMAN (R-N.Y.).
MR. VAN NORMAN, WE UNDERSTAND, WILL RETURN TO THE
UNITED STATES WITH HIS MOTHER. END TEXT.

6. DURING NOON PRESS BRIEFING APRIL 28, DEPARTMENT
SPOKESMAN CONFIRMED THAT MEETING BETWEEN VOGEL AND GILMAN
HAD TAKEN PLACE IN THE PRESENCE OF DEPARTMENT
REPRESENTATIVE JEFFREY SMITH AND THAT THOMPSON-VAN NORMAN
EXCHANGE WAS PROCEEDING AS PLANNED (BUT DID NOT REVEAL
DETAILS OF TIMES). IN RESPONSE TO DIRECT QUESTION,
HE REFUSED TO COMMENT ON WHETHER LUNT-LEBRON EXCHANGE
HAD BEEN RAISED DURING MEETING, OR ON ANY OTHER
SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS OF MEETING.
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7. DETAILS OF MRS. VAN NORMAN'S WHEREABOUTS (USBE1028)
TRANSMITTED TO MR. VAN NORMAN APRIL 29 ALONG WITH
ADVICE THAT, IN VIEW OF MRS. VAN NORMAN'S DESIRE TO AVOID
PRESS, THOSE DETAILS BE CLOSELY HELD.

8. THERE IS NO NEED TO PHOTOGRAPH EXCHANGE.

9. BEGINNING NOW, ALL TRAFFIC ON VAN NORMAN-THOMPSON
EXCHANGE SHOULD BEAR LIMDIS HANDLING CAPTION AND INCLUDE
ALL ADDRESSEES OF THIS MESSAGE. VANCE

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